

# TRAVELS OF A TREE: SOUTHWEST TAI BORROWING OF A BIOTERM -- FROM CHAM TO SHAN<sup>1</sup>

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In a previous paper (Hartmann 1996a), the author demonstrated, mostly through Central Thai (Siamese) classical literature, how heavily the Thai (including the Northeastern Thai and the Lao) have borrowed a large part of their lexicon for naming bioforms from Khmer. In a subsequent study of a Tai Dam foundation myth, it was discovered that the name of the narrative's hero was that of the stately tree whose Latin name is *dipterocarpus tuberculatus*.<sup>2</sup> The same tree name appears in the foundation myth of the Shan, or Tai-Yai, of Saen Wui, Burma, where it is also associated with their founding hero. Likewise, a myth associated with the foundation of Vientiane, Laos, has a hero of the same name.

Complicating matters, however, is the occurrence of several varieties of *dipterocarpus* and variations in local Southwestern Tai names as well. Differences may be explained on both biological and linguistic grounds. One of the names, *k* [proto-Tai tone A1], found in Northeastern Thai (Isan), Lao of Vientiane and Luang Prabang, can be traced back to Khmer and, even one step further removed, to Cham. The genesis of other names, which seem to have two or three underlying forms, is more problematic.

In this paper, the author will present a dialect map of the *dipterocarpus* in the Southwestern Tai domain tracing the path of borrowing — the "travels of a tree" — from Cham into Khmer, Lao, and Northeastern Thai and the geographic distribution of other terms for *dipterocarpus*. In addition, there will be a discussion of the symbolic power of the bioform in cultural and literary terms and a transliteration and translation of portions of the Shan version of the legend of the tree prince, Khun Teung, to illustrate how comparative linguistics and literature can reinforce each other.

## Introduction

For the past several years, I have been putting together the pieces of a project that deals with two different versions of an underlying *Ur-text* of a type of founding hero, who is called "Prince Terng" [ขุน เต็ง] by the Tai Dam (Black Tai) of Northwest Vietnam and "Prince Theung" [ขุน ทึ่ง] in Laos and Northeast Thailand.<sup>3</sup> The slight dialect difference in the names

reflects both close similarities and dramatic differences<sup>4</sup> in language (including writing systems), religion (Buddhism vs. animism), and other aspects of their cultures.<sup>5</sup> A third version of the tale of the heroic prince — in Shan called Khun Teung Kham [ขุน ตั้ง ค่ำ] "Prince Golden Dipterocarpus"— that was the most recent to turn up is found among the Shan of Saen Wui, Burma. Banchop (1975) summarizes the story in the passage below.<sup>6</sup> A segment of the story as it is told in the original Shan of Saen Wui appears directly following the summary.

### *Shan Legends*

When we come to that part that deals with this type of history [i.e., legends], if we would pass over them without any interest in them, we would miss several really interesting stories. So I asked permission of the Jao Fa [local ruling prince] to copy down Shan legends that his officials had just collected and written down in notebooks that I would then study with elder teachers. The language used is difficult because, besides its being a literary language, it is also in an old dialect that has many words that even the teachers themselves could not explain the exact meaning of. Still one obtains stories that are fun to read.

Of those that are amusing, it is, I would say, because - no matter which legends of which group - they usually begin with supernatural powers of the Shan, such as the previously mentioned Khun Lu, Khun Lai climbing down stairs from heaven to rule the kingdoms of humans, for example. And when they reach the earth, they usually cannot escape tales of a human male cohabiting with a female serpent. The Shan legend that I have taken to study is said to be indigenous with Saen Wui. It is of the same type that begins with "Yaam Nan," that is, "At that time," in the Kingdom of the Tai-Mau in the district of Ban Jetong [bǎan cǎe tǎwŋ], there was an old man and woman who had a big banana grove that was next to a pond that bordered the River Mau. The name of the place was Saen Wui because the bananas of the old man and woman came forth by the thousands. The old couple had a son whose name was Khun [Prince] Aay. Khun Aay had a special quality, namely the ability to sing well and in a "cooling" style. Whenever he was free from work, he would usually sit and sing at the edge of the pond. It so

happened that a Naga princess named Bapphawati heard him, and this made her fall in love with Khun Aay. So she transformed herself into a beautiful, young woman. They made love, and then the Naga princess led him down into her world and there fixed up a golden palace for him in Nagaland. Her father and the entire retinue of nagas transformed themselves into human shapes so as not to frighten Khun Aay. But he eventually knew what was going on, and so he devised the strategy of going home to visit his parents. The naga princess was forced to let him go. But she requested that Khun Aay raise the child that she would give birth to as an egg at the edge of the pond near the house of Khun Aay. He kept his word. (When he found the egg), he used his finger to poke a hole in the egg. He put his finger in the mouth of the infant to suck on. Milk then flowed out from the finger miraculously. And because the infant was born at the edge of a pond whose waters were "still," he was called "Teung" [ตึง]. Or it might be because the old couple found the egg at the waters' edge they feared was dangerous, and so they took a leaf of the teung tree [ตึง tree] and enclosed him in it. Khun Aay therefore named him "Khun Teung Kham" [Prince Golden Dipterocarpus] began a line of descendants from a naga princess.

#### A Shan—Saen Wii Version of Tale of Prince Teung: Thai Transliteration and English Translation

(กอตมา)

วาย หลังเจ้าโคตมะ พราเป็นเจ้า  
time later lord Kotama the lord  
*Later, the Lord Kotama*

เข้า / เมืองโพเมืองหมาก /  
enter country  
*Entered the world*

ปรินิพาน (นิพพาน) จันโคตม (จันต่อหมุ่ กี่ / ศาสนา)  
Nirvana Nirvana / religion  
*of Nirvana.*

ปีเมืองนับได้ 1274 ปี ษักราช  
year country count can 1274 year B.E.  
*It was the year 1274 B.E.*

92 ปี (เก้าสิบ ปลาย สอง)  
92 year  
*Ninety-two years later,*

ยามนั้น . อะหลัน เมืองเมา ชื่อ บ้าน

that time ? country mau name village

there was in the Kingdom of the Tai-Mau a village named

เจตอง ใน บ้าน เจตอง นั้น

cetong in village cetong that

Jetong. In the village of Jetong,

ยัง มี ปู่ย่า ผัวเมีย อยู่ . ตาม นั้น

still have grandparents husband wife live follow/around that

There was an old man and his wife living there.

จึง ีต สวน กล้วย หลวง

thus made orchard banana big

They tended a big banana grove

อยู่ตาม ไตน้ำเมาริม หนอง ใต้ นั้น

locate follow/along under/down pond that

down by a pond.

เฝ้า ลมลา สวน กล้วย สอง ขา อยู่

guard take care of orchard banana two CLF/persons post-verb

The two of them had been taking good care of the banana grove.

ตาม นั้น จึง มี ลูก ชาย กอ 1 / สอง ขา นั้น (เขา ทั้ง สอง)

follow that thus have child two CLF/person (they both)

The two of them eventually had a son who

หมอ ีต ความ เสื่อง ดี เสื่อง กัด

know how to make make song voice/sound

cool/happy/peaceful

knew how to sing soothing songs.

วัน ไค (บางวัน) มัน เข (เค:อาจจะ) ไค (หมั่น / บ่อย) กว่า ีต

day some (some days) he might get to go make

Some days he might go to make

ความ . ตาม ไค (ท้าย) น้ำเมา . นั้น กู้ วัน .

song follow below/down river mau that every day

music down by the River Mau, sometimes every day.

กู้ วัน . วัน 1 . นาง นาคา ชื่อ .

every day day 1 side/direction lady naga name

One day, a naga princess named

ปัปพวดี นั้น จึ่ง ขึ้น มา เล่น

Papphuadi that then go up come play/swim

Papphuadi came to swim

แหล เมือง คน มา เล่น อยู่ใน น้ำ

visit country people come play/swim stay in water/river  
and visit the world of people; she came to swim in the River

เมานั้น แล . จึ่ง ได้ยิน เสียง

mau that and then hear sound

Mau and then she hear the sound of

เฮ็ด ความ ปู่สวน กลว้ย นั้น .

make music post-verb orchard banana that  
someone singing a song in the banana grove.

นาง นาคาก็ยิน เป็น ถูกใจ หวาน

lady naga hear to be touch hear sweet

What the naga princess heard touched her by its sweetness.

ใจ หาก ลัง เกาเฮ็ด ร่าง นาคา กว

heart ? (build?) ? (tempt/agitate/gather into a pile?) make  
body naga go

The naga coiled her body and

เมื่อ อยู่ที่ริม (?) มัน กลัว เกา

go up stay at edge it ? (afraid?) ? (tempt/agitate/pile up?)  
went up to stay at the water's edge.

เกา จัก อ่า ได้ยิน เสียง

pile up grab neg?/surprise? hear sound/voice

She coiled up in surprise at hearing the sound

เฮ็ด ความ มัน นาง นาคา จึ่ง

make song it side naga then

of someone singing a song. The naga princess then

ผัน (เปลี่ยน) ข้งเฮ็ด ร่าง ปลา คำ (?) มา

change (change) body press out body/shape fish gold come  
transformed her body into the shape of a golden fish

เล่น อยู่ ตาม หัน ฮอ

swim/play stay follow/around rock drive/royal palace?

and swam among the rocks.

ยาม นั้น ขน อ้าย ก็ ไต่ หัน (ปลา)

time that prince ? aay got to/past see (fish)

Then Prince Aay saw the fish

คำ ยิน ฮ่าง ตี ฎก ใจ แล จึ่ง

gold decorated/beautiful good touch heart and then  
of gold and beautiful colors; he was captivated, and then

จาม (คิด อยาก ได้) ตี (ฉวย, จับ) เอา ปลา คำ . นั้น แล . ได้ แล้ว 30  
desire (want to get) catch hold of take fish gold that and can  
complete

he desired to catch the golden fish and was able to.

สอง ขา จึ่ง ลาด กัน ถาม กัน จึ่ง

two CLF./people talk together ask questions together/each  
other

The two talked and asked each other questions.

รู้ เป็น นาง นาคา แล ยาม นั้น

know to be princess naga complete time that

He knew it was the naga princess then.

นาง นาคา จึ่ง ฝน ข้าง เสด ร้าง

princess naga then build make body/shape/form

The naga princess then changed her form

สาว คน ผู้ ร้าง ตี 1 . สอง ขา จึ่ง ได้

young woman person group body good 1 two CLF/person then  
past time

into that of a shapely young woman. The two of them then

สุรัก กัน เสีย แล นาง นาคา ก็

make love together complete princess naga

made love together. The naga princess

จึ่ง ออน เอา ลูก ปู่ สวน กลาย หน

then take son grandfather orchard banana prince

then invited the son of the old banana farmer, Prince

อาย นั้น พา เมื่อ ถึง เมือง นาคา .....

?aay that lead go toward/up country naga

Aay, to be led into the world of the nagas.

[The following jumps ahead to the original fieldnotes, page 18, line  
1: The naga princess produces an egg]

หน อาย ก็ จึ่ง กว ไป หน อัน

prince ?aay PT then go go look thing

Prince Aay then went to look at the thing.

นี่อย่าเหมา อย่าเป็น ไช้ นาง นาคา แล้ว

this disturb/destroy leaf out/off to be egg lady naga complete  
*He removed the leaves around the egg of the naga princess.*

มัน จึง ลม ลา กลัว ตัว ยะ (กวนเกา) ตัว ผยาก (ทำลาย)

he then take care of ?

and he cared for it

จึง จัก เอา ต้อง ตึง หม

then grab take big leaf theung cover

by taking a theung (dipterocarpus) leaf to cover it.

ไว้ หั้น แล กว่า หลอม กว่า ไช้ กู้ วัน แล

for later use see and go search/peek go every day

Each day he went to look at it.

แม่ มัน จึง หลอม ขอม โต้ย จึง หั้น ที่

mother he then secretly follow look at/watch over then see place

His mother secretly followed him to look at it and then saw the place.

ขุน อ้าย กว่า นั่ง อยู่ หั้น . พ่อ มัน ลุก กว่า

prince ? aay go sit stay that father he get up go

Prince Aay went to sit there; his father got up and went there.

แม่ มัน จึง กว่า โต้ย (ไป ดู)

mother he then go take a look/watch

His mother then went to take a look.

จึง หั้น ไช้ นาง นาคา แล รอย

see egg princess gaga and ? (know?)

She saw the egg of the naga princess and knew

เป็น ไช้ นาง นาคา รอย ว่า ดัง นี้

to be egg lady naga ? (know?) that like this

it was the egg of the naga princess; she knew it was so.

ถึง มา วัน 1 แม่ คน เฒ่า มัน

reach come day one mother person old he

One day, his elderly mother

จึง ว่า ให้ กว่า เอา ไช้ นั้น มา ไว้

then say have/let/make do go take egg that come keep

then said that she would have him go take the egg and keep it

ก็เรื่อน ว่าคั้งนี้ชน อ้ายก็

at/in house say like this prince ?aay PT  
*in the house. When she said this, Prince Aay*

จึงกว่า ใต๋ย ไข่ นั้น แล . จึง ไค้

go take a look egg that and then get to/past  
*went to take a look at the egg and then*

หัน ไข่ นั้น แตก เป็น ชน ชาย อ่อน

see egg that break/crack to be prince male infant  
*saw that the egg had cracked open, and there was the infant prince*

ร่าง ดี ไว้แล้ว ฮอ มัน จึงเอา

shape/form/body good keep complete PT he then take  
*in good form. He then took*

มา จู ออก มัน คั้ง มัน จึง ลม (รักษา) ไว้

rub/apply to toward out he pull he then take care  
*him up and then cared for him*

ลา ไว้ใหญ่ มากา สูง มา เบา ข้าง

look after to big come expensive/go/place tall come  
*weigh/endure*  
*He looked after the boy until he became big, tall, and strong.*

ร้อง คั้ง ชื่อ บัน เสียง ว่า ฤา

call out establish/set up name make sound "Reu"  
*They called him by the name that had the sound "Reu."*

จึง จัก ร้อง ขอม ก็มัน เกิด มัน ผด

grab call out follow/along with/support place he born he born  
*They called him in keeping with the place where he was born.*

นั้น จึง ร้อง ว่า ชน คั้ง คำ คั้งนี้ ฮอ นี้ แล

that then call out say prince theung gold like this PT EXCL.  
*Thus, they called him Prince Theung Kham [golden dipterocarpus].*

[end of selected portion of text]

### Significance of the Names Teung (Shan), Theung (Lao), & Terng (Tai Dam)

In a recent paper on bioforms and biophilia in the Thai (Siamese) poem "Samuttakote Kham Chan,"<sup>7</sup> I showed how Thai poets exploit names of plants and other life forms in their poetry to create sensual and spiritual



experiences. This, I claim, is because of their closeness to and affinity for the mysteries of nature and its effect on the imagination and sense of wonder. Particularly in the Lao version of the tale of "Prince Dipterocarpus," the son is emblematic of these biophilia tendencies; he is no less than naga-tree, having been born of a serpent mother (Nang Aek Khay) and having experienced post-partum affinities—namely, being tied up to the tree in a kind of symbolic grafting—to one of the great trees of Southeast Asia, the *teung*~*theung*~*terng* tree. Sharp (1994:22) puts it dramatically.

The tallest tree are the emergents, so called because they pop up or emerge even above the general level of the canopy. But the most celebrated tree family forming the canopy in lowland tropical rain forest, with the cauliflower-like crowns, is the straight-trunked dipterocarps (*Dipterocarpaceae*), most of them valuable hardwoods sought by the timber industry....Dipterocarps may attain heights of over 70 meters and build trunk diameters of over 2 meters....Many of these trees take 70-100 years to reach full height, which is one of the reasons it is so hard to reforest economically with dipterocarps.

It would be my guess that most of the giant *dipterocarps* have been cut down in Thailand and that many of younger Thais would not have seen one, except a "museum pieces" on temple grounds where they are protected.<sup>8</sup> This loss is but one in a series of extinction of human experience for the citizen of Southeast Asia and the world as well. An American tree that is a good parallel of the Southeast Asian *dipterocarp* is the giant Sequoia or Redwood, which reaches a height of 100 meters. Like the *teung* tree, the Sequoia also has the name of a great leader, the Cherokee Indian chief Sequoyah, who invented the Cherokee syllabary for writing his language.<sup>9</sup>

### **A Linguistic Geography of the Teung Tree: *Dipterocarpus tuberculatus***

According to McFarland (1944:572), the *teung* tree is called ພລູງ /phluang/ in Korat and Kamphaengphet, ກຸງ /khuang/ in Pitsanulok, ຖິງ

/kuj/ in Laos, N. Ubon, Krabin, ຕຶ້ງ in N. Laos, ກຸ່ງ /khluj/ in Chaobon, Korat, ໂຄ່ລຸ່ງ /khloong/ in Khmer, Surin, and ຟລວງ /phlɔwŋ/ in Sui, Surin. Chanturpanth (1978:67) also states that the tree is called ຕຶ້ງ (ຕົ້ນຕຶ້ງ, ຕ້ອງຕຶ້ງ) in northern Thailand as well, but ຕ້ອງຕຶ້ງ /tɔwŋ thuŋ/ or ຕ້ອງກຸ່ງ /tɔwŋ kuj/ in Isan, or Northeast Thailand.<sup>10</sup> Tem Smitinand (1980:128) reports that it is called ກຸ່ງ /kuj/ in Ubon, Udon, and Prachinburi, ກຸ່ງ /khlɔŋ/ in Khmer-Buri Ram, ກຸ່ງ /khlɔwŋ/ in Khmer, ກວງ /khuang/ in Phitsanulok and Sukhothai, ກຸ່ງ /khlɔŋ/ in Chaobon-Nakhon Ratchasima, ໂຄ່ລຸ່ງ /khlɔwŋ/ in Khmer-Surin; ຕຶ້ງ /tuŋ/ in Northern Thai; ສະເຕັ້ງ /satɔŋ/ in Lawa-Chiang Mai; ຟລວງ /phluang/ or ຢາງຟລວງ /yaŋ phluang/ in Central Thai.

In a book titled *L'Habitation Lao* that deals with Lao architecture in Luang Prabang and Vientiane, at least three distinct kinds of *dipterocarpus* are distinguished in terms of their taxonomy, also expressed in terms of qualities of the wood used in construction. (N.B. Alternate names are listed below the common name.)<sup>11</sup> Conspicuously absent from the list, however, is the Lao name ຫ່ອງ for the *dipterocarpus* variety after whom the prince is named. One possibility is that the ຫ່ອງ variety is not used in Lao household construction, which is what the list is all about.

### 1. kung

koung *Dipterocarpus tuberculatus* ROXB. A commercial wood used for general construction and easy to work. It has a resin that has several uses

### 2. ſaad

sat *Dipterocarpus obtusifolius* TEYSM. Used for general construction. Dries well but has a tendency to crack.

### 3. ñaang

nhang, nhang'khao, nhang mouak *Dipterocarpus alatus* ROXB. Also *Dipterocarpus obtusifolius* GAERTN nhang done, nhang dèng *Dipterocarpus dyeri* P.

Judging from the above, ຕຶ້ງ *tuŋ* in northern Laos (with some overlap in Central Laos and Isan [Northeast] Thailand *thuŋ*), northern Thailand and the Saen Wii Shan area of northeast Burma is the closest in form to ເຕື້ງ *təŋ*, the Tai Dam form of the name. The Central Thai name of the tree is พลูง *phluang* or ยางพลูง *yaangphluang* and appears to be identical with the third Lao category above: **ñaang**.<sup>12</sup> The variant forms of ກູງ *kuŋ* used in Isan Thailand by ethnic Lao and Khmer indicates that the Khmer form *Daəm khloŋ* is the immediate source of borrowing.<sup>13</sup> (See map.)

However, to make linguistic matters even more complex and interesting, the Khmer borrowed the name from the Cham, the language of an Austronesian group of long prior residence in Vietnam and Cambodia but now nearly extinct as a consequence of wars. The Khmer spelled form *khlun* is pronounced *khloŋ*. It is borrowed into Khmer from Cham *kalaun* (a u is a diphthong; the spelled form is *kalon*), which became Khmer *kalun* > *khlun*, and finally Lao *klun* > *kuŋ*.<sup>14</sup>

What can be concluded from this mix of names for the *dipterocarpus* tree and its relationship to the narrative of a Tai foundation hero who carries one of these tree names and attendant symbolic value?

First, we can conclude that the Central Thai form *yaangphluang* is a biological twin or sibling of the Lao **ñaang**. They are not relevant to the discussion of the names found in the Middle Mekong River Basin.<sup>15</sup>

Second, a south to north movement of one of the names of the tree upward along the Mekong corridor is clear: Cham *kalaun* became Khmer *kalun* > *khlun*, which became, in turn, Lao *klun* > *kuŋ*.

Third, and more problematic, are the variant forms for the name of the tree and tree hero in the upper reaches of the Middle Mekong: *thu*/*tu*/*təŋ*. No rules of linguistic change come to mind that would help

to connect these three forms to kuŋ. There is a clear difference in linguistic shape that indicates a different dialect or a different variety of the tree, or possibly both. One other explanation is possible and bears looking into further. On the map, the citation shown at Chiang Mai is satêŋ, which is actually Lawa, another Mon-Khmer language.<sup>16</sup> We know that the Lawa were the predecessors of the Tai in this region and that the Lanna Tai borrowed a great deal of their culture as they took over the area. Then it is not improbable that the Tai in this more northerly region borrowed the Lawa name of the tree. Following the Tai tendency to reduce polysyllables to monosyllables when borrowing, Lawa satêŋ could have led to the Lao/Tai variant forms: thuŋ/tuŋ/təŋ. The name of the tree purportedly borrowed from the Lawa consequently became the name of the tree hero of the foundation myth common to the Shan, Tai Dam and Lao. The travels of this second name cluster and literary event is then from north to south along the Mekong cultural corridor. The suggested direction of borrowing of both sets of names of the *dipterocarpus* in two opposing directions—north to south; south to north— along the Middle Mekong River is shown on the map.

## Conclusions

In this paper we have presented data from comparative linguistics and literature to demonstrate the connectivity of Tai language and culture along the corridor of the Middle Mekong River. In this particular instance, a tree, the *dipterocarpus*, and its geographic distribution was the object around which the pursuit for patterns centered. Environment and biology play an important part in the puzzle, which is far from solved. The linguistic map, based largely on dictionary entries from Thai sources, indicates that there are at least three names for the tree depending on location—and perhaps the particular species, a matter that requires further investigation. Two sets of local dialect names, tuŋ and kuŋ cluster along the Middle Mekong

connecting what historically were the Lan Na and Lan Xang Tai kingdoms and spheres of cultural influence. The third nomenclature, *yaan* or *yaanphluan*, is basically Central Thai, i.e., Tai language away from the Mekong region.

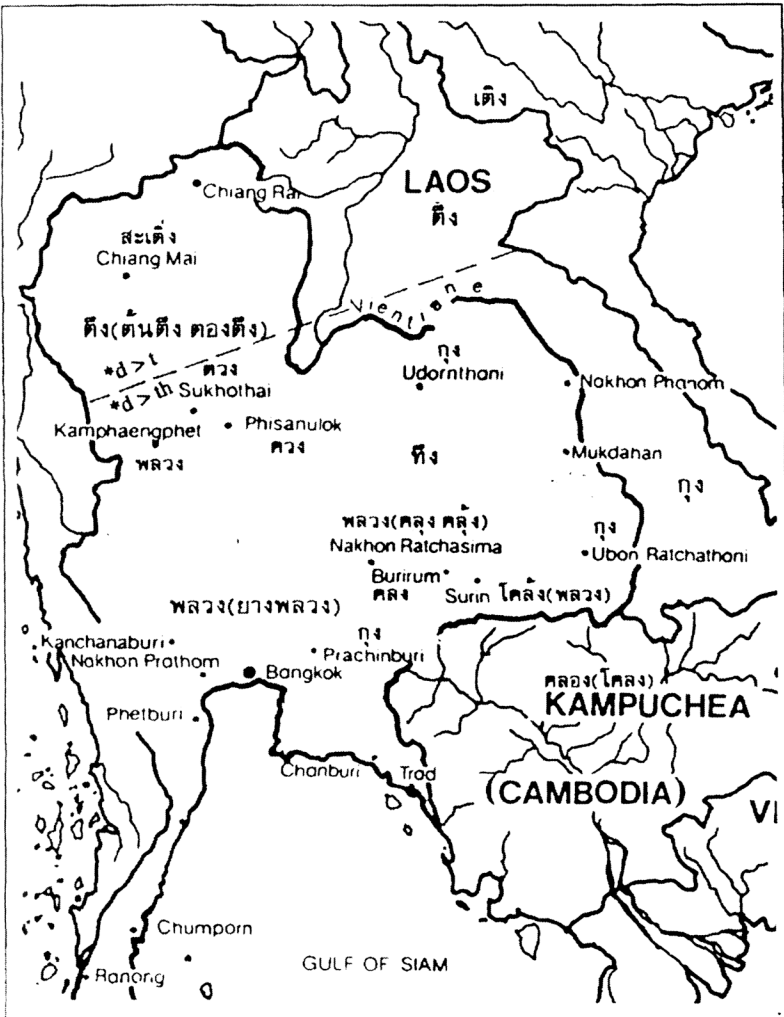
The literary tradition of different versions of tales of the tree prince also suggests Lan Na—Lan Xang beginnings and southward movement along the Middle Mekong. In his study of traditional Lao literature, Peter Koret (1996: 101-126), for one, notes the common origin of Lao and Lanna (Tai Yuan) scripts and literatures. He aligns the textual traditions of both groups to "the close relationship between Lanna and Lan Xang, and the former's cultural influence on the latter."

The Tais are known to be riverine peoples. Pranee and Sujit Wongthes (1989:161-169) list four major groups as inhabitants of river basins. One of the four outlines the region that has been the focus of this essay: "The Mekong River Group, found in Sipsong Panna, in China's Yunnan province down to the northern part of Burma, Laos, and Thailand and the Northeast Region of Thailand." In their essay, the scholars list numerous common cultural practices, mostly in the performance and literary arts that have a geographical, i.e., environmental, basis. In his work on Lao literature, principally his translation of the classic *Phra Lak Phra Lam*, Sahai (1989) similarly presents in exquisite detail the role that the Middle Mekong and its bountiful environment plays in informing the epic.

What began as a seemingly straightforward investigation into the history of the name of a Tai founder figure associated with a certain kind of tree turned out to be much more complicated than anticipated. When linguistics meets Linnaeus, much is demanded of the latter as the list of *dipterocarpus* increases and the mapping of dialect nomenclatures onto them blurs. And with this first foray into a forest of tree names, we can scarcely claim to be "out of the woods" yet.

After the body of this paper was written, still another variety of the *dipterocarpus* was found in a dictionary of Khmer-Surin in northeastern Thailand (Chantrupanth: 561). There, it is *dipterocarpus intricatus*, defined in English as 'a kind of big tree'. The Khmer word is khloŋ, and defined in Central Thai as 'máý hǎŋ', the name of a large tree of the yaŋ type.' However, the Latin term given for 'máý hǎŋ' in *The Royal Institute Thai Dictionary* is '*dipterocarpus obtusifolius* Teijsm. ex Miq.' Here the Khmer-Surin name is clearly cognate with Lao-Isan kuŋ, bringing us back to the point made at the outset: that one line of travel of this bioform was from Cham to Khmer and then into Lao and Isan-Thai, but not Central Thai.

LINGUISTIC MAP OF THAI, THAI-ISAN, LAO, NORTHERN THAI,  
NORTHERN LAO, TAI DAM, LAWA, AND KHMER NAMES FOR THE TREE  
*DIPTEROCARPUS*



<sup>1</sup> A paper first presented at the SEALS VII conference, University of Illinois – Urbana, May 1997.

<sup>2</sup> "Transmutations in a Multicultural World: A Comparative Study of Old Lao and Tai Dam Manuscript Versions of The Tale of Prince Theung or Terng." In *Proceedings of the International Conference on Tai Languages and Cultures in Honor of the Sixth Cycle of Her Royal Highness Princess Galayani Vadhana*. Bangkok: Faculty of Liberal Arts, Thammasat University, 1996. pp. 73-102.

<sup>3</sup> *khūn*, according to Condominas (1990: 44, 104-105), is borrowed from *jun*, meaning 'sovereign, chief' and is a title that designated the chief, prince, or king of a *chieng* of fortified town and its surrounding villages, together called a *muang*.

<sup>4</sup> Terweil (1983:45-46) states that the termok' *naaŋ* originally denoted a lady of high rank. The power and status attached to these titles has been lost, as can be seen clearly in Central Thai. Khanittanan (1977) mentions that in Phu Thai *thaaw*<sup>5</sup> and *naang*<sup>3</sup> are used in combination with male and female names respectively as a sign of formality or politeness. In contrast to the Buddhist Thai-Isan, the Tai Dam do not have the notion of *kam* [kharma] in their belief system or language. *Bun* [merit] and *bàap* [demerit] are found, however.

<sup>5</sup> The raising of the vowel from Tai Dam /ə/ to /u/ before the final -ng /ŋ/ is an instance of "nasal umlaut," in phonetic terms. It occurs in White Tai and other Tai languages as well.

<sup>6</sup> My translation of Banchop Phanthumetha, 1979. *pay sòɔp kham thai* [Going to Investigate Thai Words]. Bangkok: Project for Promoting Thai Identity. pp. 123-124.

<sup>8</sup> Hartmann, 1996. "Bioforms and Biophilia in Thai Poetry," *Mon Khmer Studies* 25: 161-90. See also *The Tale of Prince Samuttakote: A Buddhist Epic from Thailand*, translated, annotated, and introduced by Thomas John Hudak. Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Monographs in International Studies, Southeast Asia Series, No. 90. 1993. xxix +276 pp. Reviewed in *Crossroads* 8.2.

<sup>9</sup> See Ponsi Tharaphum (1991), who shows pictures of some of these "museum pieces."

<sup>10</sup> The tree was named after the Indian chief, not the reverse.

<sup>11</sup> There is an isogloss that cuts across the north of Thailand connecting Tak with Loey. North of this line, proto-Thai /\*d-/ becomes /t-/ , as in /tuŋ/ below the line, the correlate is /th-/ , as in /thuŋ/. See Hartmann, J. 1984, *Linguistic and Memory Structures in Tai-Lue Oral Narratives*. (Pacific Linguistics, B-90) Canberra: Australian National University. p. 32.



<sup>12</sup> Clément-Charpentier, Sophie and Pierre Clément, 1990. *L'Habitation Lao dan les Regions de Vientiane et de Louang Prabang*, Vols. I & II. Paris: Peeters. pp. 395-402.

<sup>13</sup> Central Thai initial y- is pronounced ñ- in Lao.

<sup>14</sup> The Khmer form, /Daəm khloŋ/, is reported in Martin, Marie A. 1971, *Introduction a l'ethnobotanique du Cambodge*. Paris: Editions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique. p. 70.

<sup>15</sup> I am grateful to Ratree Wayland for pointing this out to me.

<sup>16</sup> A comment on one other aspect of the two trees is required, however. The Central Thai word *yaan*, which is cognate with *ñaan*, can be translated as 'resin' or 'rubber'. Thus, in the booklet, *The History of Inthakhin Post*, it is pointed out in a footnote 1 (p. 47), "Ton Yang Luang ('tree/resin/big') [the tree to the east of the Inthakhin shrine] is a kind of *dipterocarpus* yielding resin, which is commonly used for several purposes in early times." The booklet also recalls that the area of Chiangmai was once a forest of *dipterocarpus*. At the same time, the tree *ku* also yields a resin that has several uses according to Clément-Charpentier (1990). See fn. 12 above. What is important to identify for the sake of identifying the tree of the myth is the *dipterocarpus* with the large leaf, the wrapping used to protect the infant prince.

<sup>17</sup> If not borrowed from Lawa, perhaps another language in northwestern Mon-Khmer or a Mon language in the region.

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